

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 5: General Services	Effective Date: 2/1/2007
	Section 1: Informal Adjustment (IA)	Version: 1

POLICY	OLD POLICIES: 206.2; 304.22
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- The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will initiate a program of Informal Adjustment (IA) when:
 - A child abuse or neglect (CA/N) allegation is found to be substantiated; **and**
 - Voluntary participation in family and/or rehabilitative services is the most appropriate course of action to protect the safety and well-being of the child; **and**
 - The parent/guardian/custodian consents to an IA; **and**
 - A court-approval is sought.
- The initial time frame for an IA will be a period of no more than 180 days.
- DCS will consider filing a CHINS petition if the parent/guardian/custodian does not **substantially** comply with the terms of the IA.
- DCS will enter an IA into the Indiana State Central Registry (SCR) after it has been reviewed and approved by the court.
- [NEW] DCS will re-determine if the child continues to be at imminent risk for placement when requesting an extension of the original six-month IA agreement or by the filing of a CHINS petition if increased intervention is needed. (See related policy 2.1 Child at Imminent Risk of Placement.)

Code References

- [IC 31-34-8 Program of Informal Adjustment](#)

PROCEDURE

The FCM will:

1. Hold a meeting with the family and complete the following:
 - a. Inform the perpetrator orally and provide written notice that the approved IA will be entered into the SCR, and that the information will be purged upon successful completion of the IA. Use the forms, [Informal Adjustment Agreement](#), [Notice of Data to be Entered into SCR](#) and [Notice of Data Entry into Indiana State Central Registry](#).
 - b. Review and discuss the Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Strengths and Needs Assessment with the family.
 - c. Discuss needed/available services.
 - d. Discuss any potential barriers to obtaining and/or participating in services, including, but not limited to, transportation, child care, work schedules, etc.
 - e. Complete the [Informal Adjustment program form](#), outlining the activities or actions to be completed by each person and the deadline for completion. All activities and actions should directly relate to the safety and well-being of the child.

2. Review the final document with the family to assure that each person understands and agrees to his/her responsibilities.
3. Assure that the parent/guardian/custodian and other participants understand the consequences of failure to comply with the terms of the IA before asking for signatures.
4. Provide each person who is named in the IA with one copy of the signed agreement.
5. File the IA and a Preliminary Inquiry with the court.
6. Attend the hearing, if applicable, to seek court approval of the IA.
7. As soon as possible, but not to exceed one week after the meeting, provide the family with referral information.
8. Provide the family with assistance to overcome any barriers to obtaining and/or participating in services.
9. Monitor the family's participation in services.
10. Complete and submit to the court the [Progress Report on Program of Informal Adjustment - Five Month](#).
 - a. If all items are complete or nearing completion and child safety can be assured, prepare for case closure (skip to step 14 below).
 - b. If a substantial number of the items are incomplete but the family is making progress, request an extension from the court.
 - i. Convene a meeting with the family and seek supervisory input to determine next steps if the family has made no progress.
 - ii. Re-determine if the child is at imminent risk for placement. See related policy 2.1 Child at Imminent Risk for Placement.
 - c. If the family is non-compliant, the child's safety can not be assured and the coercive intervention of the court is needed initiate a Child in Need of Services petition.
11. Continue monitoring the family's progress as long as the IA remains in effect.
12. Complete and submit to the court the [Progress Report on Program of Informal Adjustment - Eleven Month](#). If all items are complete or nearing completion and child safety can be assured, prepare for case closure (skip to step 14 below). If a substantial number of the items are incomplete but the family is making progress, seek supervisory input regarding next steps, which may include, but are not limited to, step 13 below.
13. Initiate a CHINS petition if it is determined that coercive intervention of the court is needed in order to assure the safety and well-being of the child.
14. Close the case if no further DCS involvement is required.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

FORMS AND TOOLS

- Program of Informal Adjustment – Available in ICWIS and on p. 46 of the [Juvenile Justice Benchbook: Child in Need of Services](#)
- Informal Adjustment Agreement, Notice of Data to be Entered into The Indiana State Central Registry (SF 49545) – Available in ICWIS
- Notice of Data Entry into Indiana State Central Registry (SF 49543) – Available in ICWIS
- Progress Report on Program of Informal Adjustment - Five Month (SF 52434) – Available in ICWIS
- Progress Report on Program of Informal Adjustment - Eleven Month (SF 52435) – Available in ICWIS

RELATED INFORMATION

ICWIS Tips

The IA case type should be opened with a PENDING status. Once the judge having jurisdiction has signed the IA, the FCM is to return to the Case Type screen and change the start date to the date that the judge signed the IA. The status must also be changed from PENDING to OPEN. Once the status is changed and saved, the case type start date is frozen. The format for a program of informal adjustment recommended by the Indiana Judicial Center for use in Indiana courts is available in ICWIS through Tracking in the Service/Case Management module. The format for the progress report to the court may be found in the Service/Case Management module of ICWIS. The form can be printed from ICWIS through Tracking.

Purging SCR Records for Completed IAs

The IA is automatically purged from the SCR when it is closed at successful completion. The information will remain in the SCR if the IA was not successfully completed and a CHINS petition was filed with the court.